

Bo Bi, Nicholas Sims-Williams. *Sogdian Documents from Khotan in the Museum of Renmin University of China*

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REFERENCES

Bo Bi, Nicholas Sims-Williams. *Sogdian Documents from Khotan in the Museum of Renmin University of China*. Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 2018, xii+112p. + 16 Plates

- 1 This small volume is the result of a fruitful cooperation over the last years. It presents the edition, with commentary, glossary and photos, of thirteen Sogdian fragments kept in the Museum of Renmin University of China; these are part of a collection of manuscripts which was acquired by the University in 2010 and contains texts in Iranian languages (Sogdian and Khotanese), Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese.
- 2 Coming apparently from the Khotan region, they share the origin of some of the “Turco-Sogdian” documents published by Nicholas Sims-Williams and James Hamilton in 1990 (in French) and 2015 (in English, see *AbstIr*, vol. 37-38-39, rubrique 2.1, n° 12). The Sogdian texts in the present work do not contain a date, but the other side of fragment No. 12 shows some Chinese signs, which seem to point to either 771 or 790 AD.
- 3 The texts are predominantly economic in nature; No. 1 through 4 are lists of commodities and possessions and/or recordings of transactions. Some of the letters (Nos. 5-10) are likewise concerned with economic transactions. The manuscript fragments are all written on poorly preserved paper, at least two of them using a brush (rather than a pen), in a script that is very cursive and thus rather ambiguous. In deciphering them, the authors could profit from the fact that well-preserved letters in Sogdian are known, which help decoding the greetings and other formulaic parts of the texts. Among lexical items not attested so far, one finds *βγh*, the female form of *βγ* ‘god,

lord', in the address term $\beta\gamma h xwt'ynh$ 'noble lady' ("the exact f. equivalent of $\beta\gamma xwt'w$ 'noble lord'", p. 76).

- 4 The two authors previously published these texts in two articles in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (130/4, 2010, pp. 497-508, and 135/2, 2015, pp. 261-282). The present work is a fully bilingual version and thus offers the whole body of these texts twice (Chinese version pp. 1-46, English pp. 47-85), to which the authors added a glossary (Sogdian – Chinese – English, pp. 86-100) for this publication. The volume has an introduction presenting the texts, a bibliography that conveniently repeats some of the Chinese and Japanese entries in transcription in the English section, and concludes with photos of the fragments.
- 5 The small book, pleasantly layouted, is a significant addition to our corpus of Sogdian texts from ancient Xinjiang.

AUTHORS

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